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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 17th, 2011

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Recently the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) determined that Asian longhorned beetle larvae had been found in Ohio. As you know, this invasive species has the potential to devastate trees and cause wide-spread destruction to Ohio's forested lands. Your prompt assistance and attention is paramount in ensuring the Asian longhorned beetle is not allowed to spread and ravage Ohio's forests and tree population.

As international trade with China has grown, the Asian longhorned beetle has found a safe haven in wood crates traveling to our shores. The Asian longhorned beetle is an invasive species known to be particularly damaging to a variety of trees that are native to Ohio – including maple, birch, and willow. The Asian longhorned beetle's practice of burrowing within tree trunks also shows them to be resistant to popular extermination techniques, such as chemical sprays.

Ohio is home to over 185,000 acres of state forests, and over 834,000 acres of national forested land. The Wayne National Forest – located only two hours away from the initial finding of Asian longhorned beetles in Ohio – envelopes over 240,000 acres of wildlife habitats, recreation areas, and hardwood trees. The Shawnee State Forest with its 63,000 acres is only one hour away. Without your rapid attention Ohio's forests and parks could be at serious risk.

Thank you for your prompt decision to survey the affected area. It is imperative that USDA work with state and local officials to develop a comprehensive plan for halting the spread of this pest. I look forward to our continuing work on ensuring the health of Ohio's trees and forests.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator